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INTERNATIONAL APPLICATION NO.
PCT/US00/11926INTERNATIONAL FILING DATE
2 May 2000PRIORITY DATE CLAIMED
4 May 1999

TITLE OF INVENTION

METHOD OF ULTRAFILTRATION

APPLICANT(S) FOR DO/EO/US
Jack Thacher Leonard

Applicant herewith submits to the United States Designated/Elected Office (DO/EO/US) the following items and other information:

1. This is a **FIRST** submission of items concerning a filing under 35 U.S.C. 371.
2. This is a **SECOND** or **SUBSEQUENT** submission of items concerning a filing under 35 U.S.C. 371.
3. This is an express request to begin national examination procedures (35 U.S.C. 371(f)) at any time rather than delay examination until the expiration of the applicable time limit set in 35 U.S.C. 371(b) and PCT Articles 22 and 39(1).
4. A proper Demand for International Preliminary Examination was made by the 19th month from the earliest claimed priority date.
5. A copy of the International Application as filed (35 U.S.C. 371 (c) (2))
 - a. is transmitted herewith (required only if not transmitted by the International Bureau).
 - b. has been transmitted by the International Bureau.
 - c. is not required, as the application was filed in the United States Receiving Office (RO/US).
6. A translation of the International Application into English (35 U.S.C. 371(c)(2)).
7. A copy of the International Search Report (PCT/ISA/210).
8. Amendments to the claims of the International Application under PCT Article 19 (35 U.S.C. 371 (c)(3))
 - a. are transmitted herewith (required only if not transmitted by the International Bureau).
 - b. have been transmitted by the International Bureau.
 - c. have not been made; however, the time limit for making such amendments has NOT expired.
 - d. have not been made and will not be made.
9. A translation of the amendments to the claims under PCT Article 19 (35 U.S.C. 371(c)(3)).
10. An oath or declaration of the inventor(s) (35 U.S.C. 371 (c)(4)).
11. A copy of the International Preliminary Examination Report (PCT/IPEA/409).
12. A translation of the annexes to the International Preliminary Examination Report under PCT Article 36 (35 U.S.C. 371 (c)(5)).

Items 13 to 20 below concern document(s) or information included:

13. An Information Disclosure Statement under 37 CFR 1.97 and 1.98.
14. An assignment document for recording. A separate cover sheet in compliance with 37 CFR 3.28 and 3.31 is included.
15. A **FIRST** preliminary amendment.
16. A **SECOND** or **SUBSEQUENT** preliminary amendment.
17. A substitute specification.
18. A change of power of attorney and/or address letter.
19. Certificate of Mailing by Express Mail
20. Other items or information:

Authorization to charge fees to deposit acct no 133577; references cited in PTO 1449; postcard

U.S. APPLICATION NO. (IF KNOWN, SEE 37 CFR 09/936668	INTERNATIONAL APPLICATION NO. PCT/US00/11926	ATTORNEY'S DOCKET NUMBER MCA-448 PC/US
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21. The following fees are submitted:

BASIC NATIONAL FEE (37 CFR 1.492 (a) (1) - (5)) :

<input type="checkbox"/> Neither international preliminary examination fee (37 CFR 1.482) nor international search fee (37 CFR 1.445(a)(2) paid to USPTO and International Search Report not prepared by the EPO or JPO	\$1,000.00
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> International preliminary examination fee (37 CFR 1.482) not paid to USPTO but Internation Search Report prepared by the EPO or JPO	\$860.00
<input type="checkbox"/> International preliminary examination fee (37 CFR 1.482) not paid to USPTO but international search fee (37 CFR 1.445(a)(2)) paid to USPTO	\$710.00
<input type="checkbox"/> International preliminary examination fee paid to USPTO (37 CFR 1.482) but all claims did not satisfy provisions of PCT Article 33(1)-(4)	\$690.00
<input type="checkbox"/> International preliminary examination fee paid to USPTO (37 CFR 1.482) and all claims satisfied provisions of PCT Article 33(1)-(4)	\$100.00

ENTER APPROPRIATE BASIC FEE AMOUNT =

\$860.00

Surcharge of **\$130.00** for furnishing the oath or declaration later than 20 30 months from the earliest claimed priority date (37 CFR 1.492 (e)).

\$0.00

CLAIMS	NUMBER FILED	NUMBER EXTRA	RATE	
Total claims	22 - 20 =	2	x \$18.00	\$36.00
Independent claims	2 - 3 =	0	x \$80.00	\$0.00
Multiple Dependent Claims (check if applicable).			<input type="checkbox"/>	\$0.00
			TOTAL OF ABOVE CALCULATIONS =	\$896.00
Reduction of 1/2 for filing by small entity, if applicable. Verified Small Entity Statement must also be filed (Note 37 CFR 1.9, 1.27, 1.28) (check if applicable).			<input type="checkbox"/>	\$0.00
			SUBTOTAL =	\$896.00
Processing fee of \$130.00 for furnishing the English translation later than <input type="checkbox"/> 20 <input type="checkbox"/> 30 months from the earliest claimed priority date (37 CFR 1.492 (f)).			<input type="checkbox"/>	\$0.00
			TOTAL NATIONAL FEE =	\$896.00
Fee for recording the enclosed assignment (37 CFR 1.21(h)). The assignment must be accompanied by an appropriate cover sheet (37 CFR 3.28, 3.31) (check if applicable).			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	\$40.00
			TOTAL FEES ENCLOSED =	\$936.00
			Amount to be: refunded	\$
			charged	\$

A check in the amount of to cover the above fees is enclosed.

Please charge my Deposit Account No. **133577** in the amount of to cover the above fees.
A duplicate copy of this sheet is enclosed.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any fees which may be required, or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. **133577** A duplicate copy of this sheet is enclosed.

NOTE: Where an appropriate time limit under 37 CFR 1.494 or 1.495 has not been met, a petition to revive (37 CFR 1.137(a) or (b)) must be filed and granted to restore the application to pending status.

SEND ALL CORRESPONDENCE TO:

John Dana Hubbard, US Reg No. 30,465
Millipore Corporation
80 Ashby Road
Bedford, MA 01730
Phone: 781-533-2152


SIGNATURE
John Dana Hubbard
NAME
30,465
REGISTRATION NUMBER
September 13, 2001
DATE

PTO/PST Rec'd 1 SEP 2001

METHOD OF ULTRAFILTRATION

Related Cases

5 This case is related to USSN 60/132,369, filed May 5, 1999, entitled "Method of Ultrafiltration, designating Jack T. Leonard and Steve Toth as co-inventors.

The present invention relates to a method of ultrafiltration. More particularly, it relates to a method for ultrafiltration using constant pressure differential as the driving force.

10 **Background of the Invention**

Methods for ultrafiltration have relied on centrifugal forces to force the liquid component through an ultrafiltration membrane. Typically, positive pressure has been used when large volumes of fluid are to be filtered (e.g. stirred cells or spiral UF cartridges). Centrifugal force is the 15 prevalent method used with small ultrafiltration devices, although some positive pressure attempts have been made with varying and impracticable results.

Ultrafiltration with small devices is becoming the staple in biological research such as DNA and protein research as researchers look to use smaller and smaller quantities in their research and as automation becomes more accepted. Such devices are either a single filter device such as 20 is shown in US Patents 4,632,761, 4,772,972 and 4,832,851 or multiple well plates as is known from US Patents 5,141,718 and 5,223,133.

The process of ultrafiltration in such devices is used to fractionate different sized molecules from each other. This may be used to remove impurities from the process used to develop or separate out the desired component or to separate the desired component from any 25 other components in the liquid. The process results in a concentration of a retained solute above the membrane with a low molecular weight component passing through the membrane thereby removing it from the fluid being filtered. The liquid/ solid material retained above the membrane is called the retentate and the liquid below the membrane is called the filtrate.

In order to remove or reduce the concentration of impurities such as low molecular 30 weight components and various salts in the retentate, the material must be diluted by the addition of a liquid. While trying to affect a fractionation, low concentration factors sometimes delivered by

centrifugal ultrafiltration requires the use of multiple dilution and filtration steps (i.e. diafiltration) to deliver the retentate in a concentrated and sufficiently pure and relatively salt-free form. This is particularly true for small volume devices because of the low head height associated with these small volumes which results in low driving pressures. Moreover in the centrifugal process, the

5 pressure doesn't remain constant. Rather it is always and continuously decreasing during the process as the volume and thus the head height decreases during filtration in that the pressure is determined solely by the height of the liquid column above the membrane and the g-force applied to the membrane face. However as the centrifuge process proceeds and the head height lessens, the pressure declines dramatically, resulting in flux decay (reduction in filtration rate and efficiency)

10 over time.

Additionally, acceptable designs for centrifugal ultrafiltration devices and filtrate retrieval components are constrained by the centrifuge rotor dimensions and the strength of the plastics. These constraints, in turn, limit the maximum g-force that a given device can tolerate before failing. Ultimately, the membrane type and active membrane area, strength of the plastic housing, g-force, 15 and the ability to achieve and maintain adequate head height will determine the performance of the centrifugal ultrafiltration device.

Vacuum manifolds are well accepted and widely used in many devices using microporous or macroporous filters. Positive pressure manifolds have also been suggested for microporous applications. However, ultrafiltration devices have not been designed to fit either manifold.

20 Moreover, there is a widely held belief in the art that ultrafiltration with vacuum is far too slow to be practical. In fact, this perception is held even for larger ultrafiltration devices where initial volumes are high for a fixed surface area of ultrafiltration membranes. This has led to the state of the art where centrifugal force is used to practice ultrafiltration of small samples.

US Patent 5,679,310 suggests using a vacuum to filter a multiple well plate which utilizes 25 ultrafiltration or microporous hollow fibers or other large surface area configurations of membranes instead of flat sheet membranes. The hollow fibers are reported to be used in lieu of flat sheet membranes in order to increase the total surface area of the membrane over that available with a flat sheet. To the knowledge of the inventors, this product has never been commercialized.

The device has several drawbacks. First, it uses a highly three dimensional filter (hollow 30 fiber) to increase overall surface area, but then severely restricts the ability of the filter to discharge filtrate from the well through the use of one or more small openings which connect the hollow fiber

lumen to the exterior of the well. The extremely small surface area available for filtration from the well as compared to a flat sheet (estimated as being less than about 20% of that of a flat sheet), results in a filtration rate that would not be close to that achieved with centrifugation on a flat sheet. Perhaps this is why vacuum was suggested, as a means for increasing the rate to a level closer to 5 that of a flat sheet with centrifugation. Second, due to its 3-dimensionality, recovery of retentate from the well using conventional techniques such as pipetting is difficult, if not impossible. Last and most importantly, as the level of fluid in the well decreases, the flux and available filtration area also dramatically decline as less and less filter area is below the fluid level and thus rendering it progressively less capable of filtering the remaining fluid, leading to the same flux decay problems 10 found with flat sheet devices using centrifugation.

What is desired is a process which overcomes the problems of centrifugation in flat sheet ultrafiltration or vacuum in 3-D hollow fiber ultrafiltration especially in small volume single or multiple well devices and which provides such filtration in a time comparable or shorter than that achieved with the centrifugation process today. The present invention provides such a process.

15

Summary of the Invention

The present invention provides a process for ultrafiltration using a constant pressure differential as the driving force for the filtration process. High flow rates can be maintained for 20 durations sufficient for most applications using this process. This allows for separation of low volumes of starting materials in a shorter period of time than can be achieved with centrifugation. Additionally, constant pressure differential driven ultrafiltration is not subject to flux decay over time with non-polarizing solutes as occurs in centrifugal ultrafiltration. The consequence of either 25 process is that much higher concentration factors can be achieved using constant pressure differential driven ultrafiltration as compared to centrifugal ultrafiltration. Additionally, although flux decay is observable using constant pressure differential driven ultrafiltration with polarizing solutes such as concentrated proteins, constant pressure differential driven ultrafiltration is faster than centrifugal ultrafiltration in most situations. Lastly, the process of constant pressure differential driven ultrafiltration reduces or eliminates the need for time-consuming repeat dilutions and 30 filtrations that are frequently required with centrifugation to remove low molecular weight contaminants.

The present process involves taking an ultrafiltration device containing one or more ultrafiltration wells, each well containing an ultrafiltration membrane and applying a constant pressure differential to the liquid within the device in order to cause a constant pressure differential driven ultrafiltration to occur. The constant pressure differential is applied at a force and for a time 5 sufficient to achieve a desired level of ultrafiltration.

It is an object of the present invention to provide a process for ultrafiltration comprising the steps of providing a device containing an ultrafiltration membrane, said membrane having an upstream and downstream sides, said device having a first reservoir adjacent the upstream side of the membrane for holding a volume of liquid to be filtered and having a second reservoir or drain 10 on the downstream side of the membrane for collecting liquid that is filtered from the sample through the membrane, placing a liquid volume into the first reservoir of the device, and applying a constant pressure differential force to the liquid at a force and time sufficient to cause substantially all of the liquid to pass from the first reservoir through the membrane to the second reservoir or drain.

15 It is another object of the present invention to provide a process for the concentration of nucleic acids and proteins comprising the steps of providing an ultrafiltration membrane having an upstream and a downstream side, said membrane having a molecular cutoff between 100 Daltons (0.1kDaltons(kD)) and 300kD, adding a volume of liquid containing a biological material selected from the group consisting of nucleic acids, proteins and blends thereof and subjecting the material 20 to a constant pressure differential until a desired concentration of the biological material on the upstream side is reached.

These and other objects of the present invention will become obvious from the specification and appended claims below.

25 **In The Drawings**

Figure 1 shows a graph depicting the rate and overall time required to filter a given volume of sample by constant pressure differential and centrifugation.(500 μ l)

Figure 2 shows a graph depicting the rate and overall time required to filter a given volume 30 of sample by constant pressure differential and centrifugation.(300 μ l)

Figure 3 shows a close up of a portion of the graph of Figure 2.

Figure 4 shows a graph depicting the rate and overall time required to filter a given volume of sample by constant pressure differential and centrifugation.(100μl)

Figure 5 shows a graph depicting the effect of increasing the constant pressure differential over that used in Figures 1-4.(40psi)

5 Figure 6 shows a graph of the results from Example 1 utilizing a negative constant pressure differential.

Figure 7 shows a graph with the results from Example 2 utilizing a positive constant pressure differential.

10 **Detailed Description of the Invention**

The present invention is a process for the ultrafiltration and/or concentration of materials, preferably biological materials such as nucleic acids and/or proteins (although other materials typically filtered by ultrafiltration may be used).

15 The process involves applying a constant pressure differential force to the material to be filtered for a period of time and at a force sufficient to cause the desired level of filtration or concentration.

20 By "constant pressure differential" it is meant either a positive pressure or negative (or vacuum) pressure. Unlike the pressure of the centrifugal method in which the pressure is always decreasing over time due to a reduction in head height of the liquid, in a constant pressure differential process the pressure acting on the liquid can remain constant over the filtration cycle. Additionally, as the pressure is independent of head height of the liquid on which it is acting it may even be increased over time in order to drive the filtration process to completion. It is also within this definition to have a decrease in pressure over time if desired, however unlike in centrifugation, 25 this decrease is controlled and is independent of head height of the liquid thus reducing or eliminating flux decay.

30 Ultrafiltration membranes are typically rated by their nominal molecular weight cutoff (ie the largest sized molecule which can pass through the particular membrane) rather than by average pore size (as with microfiltration membranes). Typically, molecular cutoffs in the range of from about 100 Daltons (100D) to about 500 kiloDaltons (500kD) are the preferred membranes useful in the present device. Preferably the range is from about 100D to about 300kD and more preferably

from about 3kD to about 300 kD. Ultrafiltration membranes can be made from a variety of materials including but not limited to polyamides, polysulphones, polyethersulphones polyarylsulphones, polyphenylsulphones, cellulosics, regenerated celluloses and polyvinylidene fluoride. They may be symmetrical or asymmetrical with asymmetrical designs being preferred.

5 One preferred method of the present invention is to use a small volume UF filtration device such as a single well device like Ultrafree® or Centricon® or Microcon® single well device available from Millipore Corporation, see U.S. Patent 4,632,761. These devices are designed for centrifugal filtration and are simply inserted into a centrifuge that is spun at certain revolutions to give a g-force sufficient to drive the ultrafiltration. In the present method, a constant pressure
10 differential force is applied to the liquid in the device and the constant pressure differential becomes the driving force for the filtration process rather than the traditional g-force of centrifugation. When using a positive pressure differential (positive pressure), it is typically applied to the topside of the liquid to drive the liquid through the membrane. When a negative pressure differential or vacuum is used, the pressure is typically applied to the downstream side of the
15 membrane so as to act on the bottom of the liquid and draw it through the membrane.

The same process can be used with a multiple walled plate, such as is disclosed in U.S. Patents 4,902,481 and 5,047,215. These plates are commercially available in a number of configurations, generally containing from about 6 to 1536 wells per plate. The most common plate has 96 wells and is available from Millipore Corporation as the MultiScreen® 96 well plate. In the
20 process according to the present invention, the plate can be mounted on top of a vacuum manifold such that the vacuum is applied to the downstream side of the filter. A sample to be filtered is placed into one or more of the wells and the vacuum is applied at a force and time sufficient to reach the desired level of filtration. Alternatively a positive manifold can be mounted on the upstream side of the membrane and a positive pressure differential can be applied to the liquid at a
25 force and time sufficient to achieve the desired filtration.

The level of force (whether positive or negative) applied depends upon a number of factors among them are: the amount of sample to be filtered, the type of membrane used (the molecular cutoff of the membrane, its strength and thickness), the active filtration area of the membrane, the speed at which the filtration is to occur and the level of polarization of the sample.

30 The strength of the plastic is a much lesser variable especially as compared to centrifugal devices where plastic strength of the device in large part controls the g-force that can be supplied

and therefore the rate and amount of filtration which can be achieved. These means that thinner, less robust devices may be used and achieve comparable or superior filtration rates and percentages. One such advantage is the ability to use vacuum-formed trays especially with a vacuum driven or low positive pressure driven pressure differential process, something that is not available with centrifugal operated devices where such trays cannot withstand the required g-force for filtration to occur.

5 Additionally, unlike centrifugal filtration, constant pressure differential filtration is completely independent of the ability to achieve and maintain a head height meaning that the process is not typically subject to any flux decay at non-polarizing concentrations of solute.

10 Typically, with small volumes, the consequence is that much higher concentration factors are achievable with constant pressure differential driven ultrafiltration as can be achieved with centrifugation within the same amount of time.

15 Normally, the volumes of liquid in which this process can be used will vary, with a high value of about 2 milliliters. More typically, it is used with volumes of less than 1 milliliter and preferably below 0.5 milliliters (500 microliters). This is clearly shown in the graph of Figure 1. As can be clearly seen there is an upper limit at which, due to sufficient head height, centrifugation is just as quick as the constant pressure differential process of the present invention (the exact level is dependent among other things upon the fluid used and the level of constant pressure differential and centrifugation used). However, as will be explained below in conjunction with diafiltration, even 20 when the rates are clearly faster for centrifugation, there are other compelling reasons for still using the process of the present invention rather than centrifugation as it eliminates or lessens the need for diafiltration.

25 At lower volumes, it is clear however that use of the constant pressure differential of the present invention is clearly faster than that of centrifugation. The point at which the constant pressure differential process is faster than centrifugation is hereinafter referred to as the "breakthrough point". Figure 2 shows just such an example. Here, the breakthrough point is at about the 7 minute mark. As shown in Figure 2, when using a small volume, about 0.300 milliliters, the present process is about 60% faster than centrifugation.

30 Figure 3 is a close up of the graph of Figure 2 for the last 0.020 milliliters of fluid to be filtered. Here the differences between the present invention and centrifugation and the breakthrough point can be clearly and dramatically shown.

Figure 4 shows the same effect with even smaller starting volumes of fluid. Here, as shown, the present process is about 5 times faster than that of centrifugation.

Figure 5 shows the effect that varying the level of the constant pressure differential has on the process. In this example, a 3.5 fold increase in the constant pressure differential over that applied in Figure 1 results in an almost 6 fold increase in filtration speed. Additionally, the breakthrough point occurs at about 1 minute as compared to 7 minutes for that of Figure 1.

Flux decay may occur in filtering materials that have a high level of polarizing characteristics. In those instances, some flux decay may be observed during filtration by the present process, but this is independent of head height and has to do with the inherent properties of the material being filtered. This means that smaller starting quantities of sample may be used and high levels of ultrafiltration and recovery can be achieved at satisfactory rates even with the presence of such polarizing materials, something that is not always possible with centrifugal processes.

The constant pressure differential may be negative, e.g. a reduced pressure(below atmospheric) or a vacuum or positive e.g. above atmospheric.

Typically, a negative pressure differential or vacuum force of from about 5 inches Hg to about 27 inches Hg can be used (169-914 millibars) More preferably from about 10 to about 27 inches (338-914 millibars) can be used. The level of vacuum force can be easily varied by the user to fit the desired parameters of the system, the rate of ultrafiltration desired and the sample he/she is using.

Typically, a positive pressure differential of from about 5 to about 80 psi can be used. Higher pressures may be used with devices that have the strength to withstand such pressures. More preferably, from about 40 to about 60 psi can be used. The level of positive pressure can be easily varied by the user to fit the desired parameters of the system, the rate of ultrafiltration desired and the sample he/she is using.

The amount of starting fluid to be filtered can vary widely. However this process has been found particularly useful with small volumes of liquid which cannot typically generate or maintain a suitable head height. Such volumes are generally under about 1000 microliters, preferably less than about 500 microliters and may be as little as 1 microliter.

An additional advantage of the process of the present invention is that the need for diafiltration (reduction of salts or contaminants by repeated dilutions in ultrapure water or solvent

followed by centrifugal filtration to remove the solvated impurities and salts) can be reduced or eliminated, making this process of particular benefit to the biological research area where such diafiltration steps are time consuming and if not complete, can skew the results obtained.

It has been known that a single pass centrifugation process will not remove all salts and

5 other impurities from a biological sample. Therefore, the normal protocol is to dilute the retentate in ultrapure water or a solvent and re-centrifuge the material one or more times in order to draw out a sufficient volume of these impurities.

It has been discovered that in normal centrifugation, as the volume of liquid above the membrane gets below a certain level, typically below 1 microliter volume, evaporation of the liquid

10 is primarily phenomenon responsible for the removal of the liquid, not ultrafiltration. This is due to the low head height that results in little if any pressure being applied to the remaining liquid and thereby little if any filtration occurring. Because of this, any impurity is simply dehydrated onto the surface of the filter. When a reconstituting liquid is added to the retentate, these materials simply dissolve into the liquid and remain with the retentate. This explains the need for several diafiltration steps.

15 It has been discovered that in using the constant pressure differential process of the present invention filtration remains the dominant means for removing these impurities (as it is independent of head height in order to function), thereby causing the impurities to pass through the membrane and out of the retentate to a much greater level than can be achieved with centrifugation. Essentially all impurities are removed with the current process in a single pass whereas often less than 90% of all impurities are removed with a single pass using the traditional centrifugation process. This allows one to reduce or to eliminate the need for diafiltration steps after filtration and provides a purer product for further use.

20 As mentioned above, this process is particularly useful when starting with small volumes as the process is quicker than centrifugation. Additionally when the desire is to remove impurities from a biological sample, this process may be used with larger starting samples even though the filtration time may be longer than that for a centrifugation process as it will result in a purer retentate with fewer if no diafiltration steps. The overall time savings (filtration and diafiltration) can justify the apparent increase in filtration time.

25 30 Alternatively, one may combine the efficiencies of both processes to process large volumes of biological samples with higher resultant purity. One may simply centrifuge the initial

volume until about 20% or less of the original volume remains (or about at least 80% of the initial volume has been removed by centrifugation). Thereafter, one applies the constant pressure differential process of the present invention to remove remaining impurities from the sample. In doing so, one can substantially reduce the time needed to conduct the ultrafiltration as well as 5 reduce or eliminate the need for several diafiltration steps.

Example 1

One hundred microliters of distilled water were placed in all wells of 96-well ultrafiltration 10 plates with a nominal molecular weight cut-off of 30 kD. The plate was placed on top of a collection plate and it was centrifuged at 2,000 x g in a swinging bucket rotor. Plates were also placed on a vacuum manifold, and a vacuum applied at 24 inches of Hg (12 psi), and the time required to "go to dryness" was determined. The amount of solution remaining in the plates was determined by weighing on a microbalance after processing for specific time intervals.

15 The average amount of solution remaining per well was plotted as a function of time (Figure 6). This figure illustrates that higher concentration factors are achievable by vacuum under these conditions, and that the experimental values closely fit the predicted values.

Example 2

20 Centricon® centrifugal ultrafiltration units with a nominal molecular weight cut-off of 30 kD were each loaded with 1.64 milliliters of distilled water. The Centricon® units were centrifuged at 2,000 x g in a swinging bucket rotor. Another set of Centricon® units were loaded with 1.64 milliliters of water and 40 psi of constant positive pressure was applied to the reservoir using 25 compressed air. The amount of solution remaining in the Centricon® was determined by weighing on a microbalance after applying constant positive pressure, or after centrifuging for specific time intervals. Retained liquid was recovered from the centrifuged Centricon® units using the patented reverse spin technique.

30 The average amount of solution remaining per Centricon® unit was plotted as a function of time (Figure 7). Theoretical values, calculated using known flow rate for this membrane type, are also plotted. This Figure illustrates that higher concentration factors are achievable by constant positive pressure under these conditions, and that the experimental values for both positive

pressure and centrifugation closely fit the predicted values. Even after 17 minutes of centrifugation, 2.5 microliters on average could be recovered from the Centricon® units by reverse spinning. This provides evidence that centrifugal ultrafiltration is indeed asymptotic (*i.e.*, does not achieve zero volume by active ultrafiltration).

5

What I Claim:

Claims:

5 1) A process for the concentration or purification of nucleic acids and proteins comprising the steps of providing an ultrafiltration membrane having an upstream and a downstream side, said membrane having a molecular cutoff between 100 D and 300kD, adding a volume of liquid of less than about 1000 microliters, said volume containing a biological material selected from the group consisting of nucleic acids, proteins and blends thereof and subjecting the volume to a constant pressure differential until a desired concentration of the biological material on the upstream side is reached.

10 2) A process for the concentration or purification of nucleic acids and proteins comprising the steps of providing an ultrafiltration membrane having an upstream and a downstream side, said membrane having a molecular cutoff between 100 D and 300kD, adding a volume of liquid containing a biological material selected from the group consisting of nucleic acids, proteins and blends thereof and subjecting the material to centrifugation until at least about 350 microliters or less of the initial volume remains, then subjecting the remaining volume to a constant pressure differential until a desired concentration of the biological material on the upstream side is reached.

15 3) The process of claim 1 wherein the constant pressure differential is a vacuum from about 169 millibars to about 914millibars

20 4) The process of claim 2 wherein the constant pressure differential is a vacuum from about 169 millibars to about 914millibars

5) The process of claim 1 wherein the constant pressure differential is a positive pressure from about 5 to about 80 psi.

25 6) The process of claim 2 wherein the constant pressure differential is a positive pressure from about 5 to about 80 psi.

7) The process of claim 1 wherein the device is a single well device.

8) The process of claim 1 wherein the device is a multiple well device.

9) The process of claim 1 wherein the device is a 96 well plate.

30 10) The process of claim 1 wherein the number of wells in the plate is from about 6 to about 1536.

11) The process of claim 2 wherein the device is a single well device.

12) The process of claim 2 wherein the device is a multiple well device.

13) The process of claim 2 wherein the device is a 96 well plate.

14) The process of claim 2 wherein the number of wells in the plate is from about 6 to about 1536.

5 15) The process of claim 1 wherein the membrane has a molecular cutoff of from about 100 Daltons to about 500 kDaltons.

16) The process of claim 2 wherein the cutoff is from about 3 to about 300 kDaltons.

17) The process of claim 1 wherein the membrane is made of a material selected from the group consisting of polyamides, polysulphones, polyethersulphones

10 polyarylsulphones, cellulosics, regenerated celluloses, polyolefins such as polyethylene and polypropylene and polyvinylidene fluoride.

18) The process of claim 2 wherein the membrane is made of a material selected from the group consisting of polyamides, polysulphones, polyethersulphones polyarylsulphones, cellulosics, regenerated celluloses, polyolefins such as polyethylene and polypropylene and polyvinylidene fluoride.

15 19) The process of claim 1 wherein the starting volume of liquid is less than about 500 microliters.

20) The process of claim 1 wherein the starting volume of liquid is less than 350 microliters.

21) The process of claim 1 wherein the process is free of a diafiltration step.

22) The process of claim 2 wherein the process is free of a diafiltration step.

UF Throughput

(Vac.=12psi,Cent.=2000g,Flux=.016ml/min/cm²/psi,Area=.034 in²)

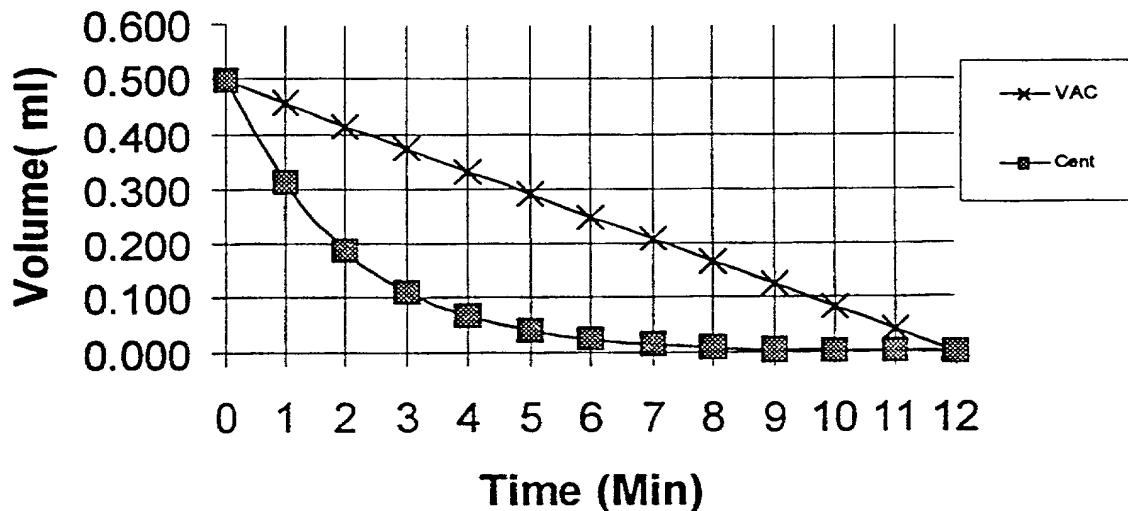


Figure 1

UF Throughput

(Vac.=12psi,Cent.=2000g,Flux=.016ml/min/cm²/psi,Area=.034 in²)

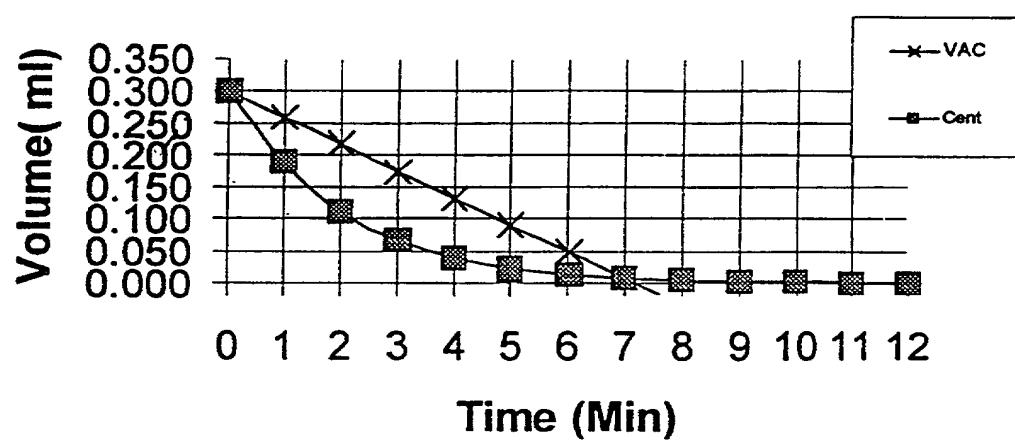


Figure 2

UF Throughput

(Vac.=12psi,Cent.=2000g,Flux=.016ml/min/cm²/psi,Area=.034 in²)

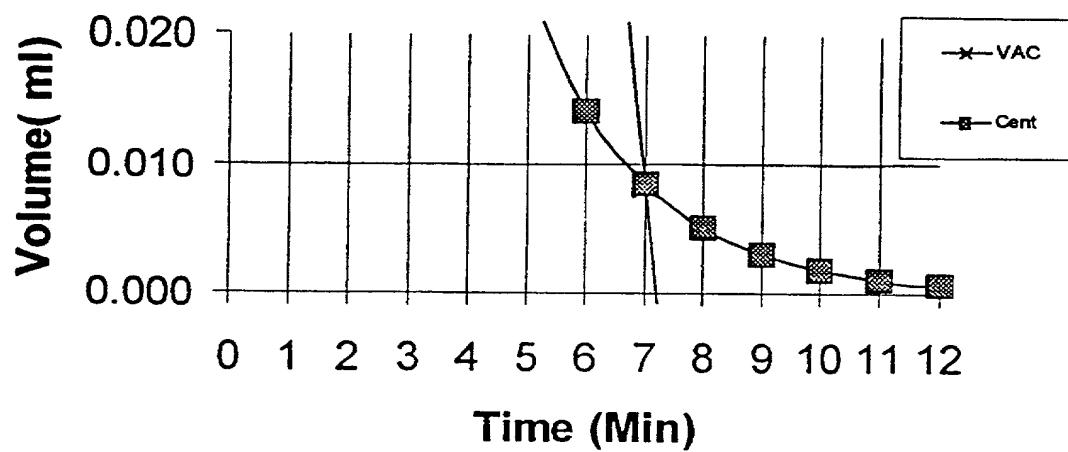


Figure 3

1095511361

UF Throughput

(Vac.=12psi,Cent.=2000g,Flux=.016ml/min/cm²/psi,Area=.034 in²)

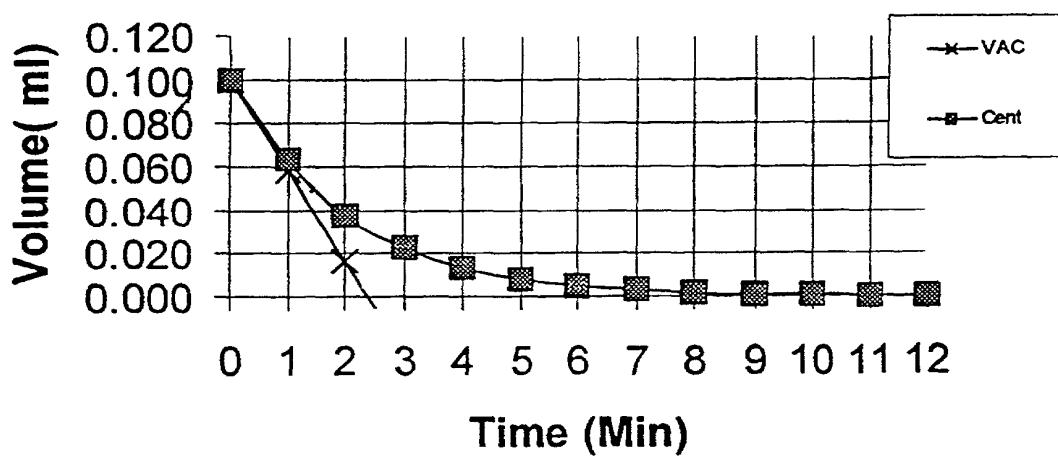


Figure 4

UF Throughput

(Vac.=40psi,Cent.=2000g,Flux=.016ml/min/cm²/psi,Area=.034 in²)

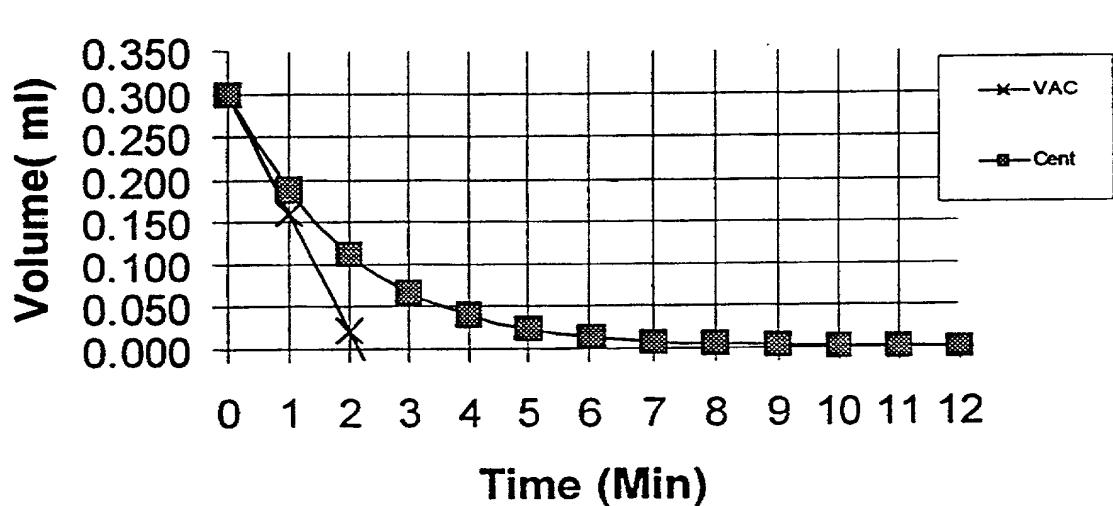


Figure 5

UF Throughput
(Vac.=12psi,Cent.=2000g,Flux=.016ml/min/cm²/psi,Area=.034 in²)

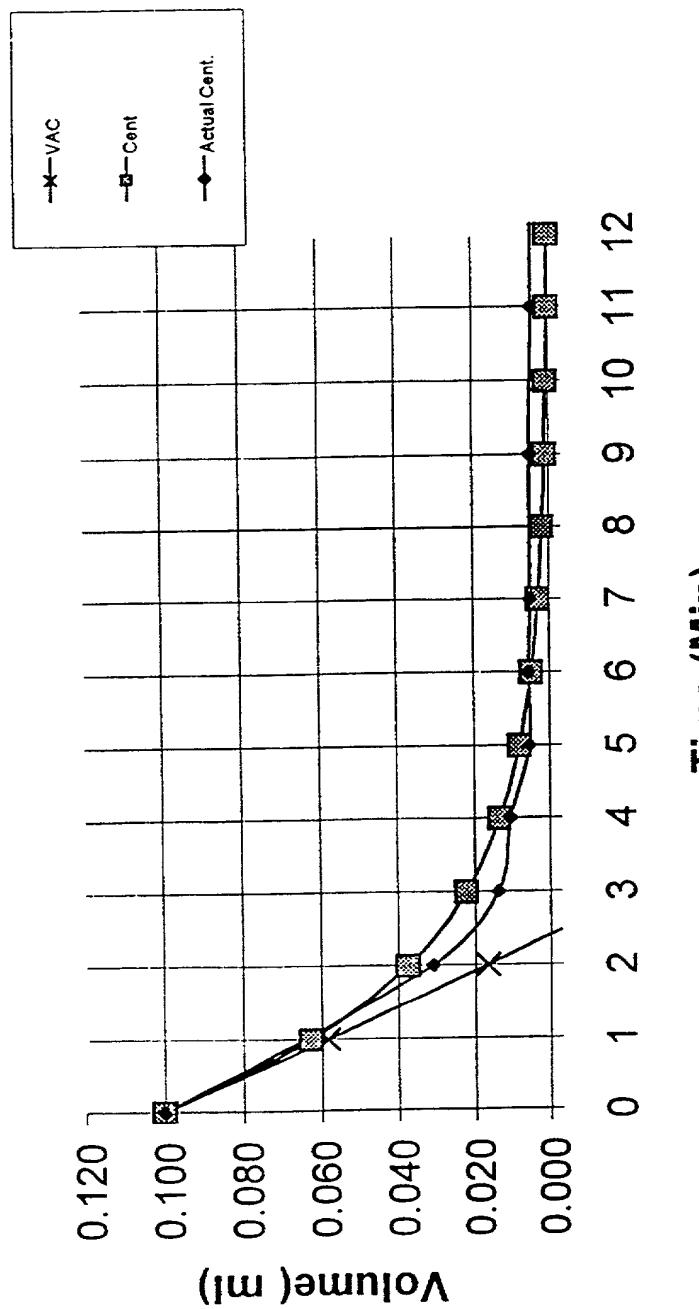


Figure 6

UF Throughput

(Press.=40psi,Cent.=2000g,Flux=.016ml/min/cm²/psi,Area=.138 in²)

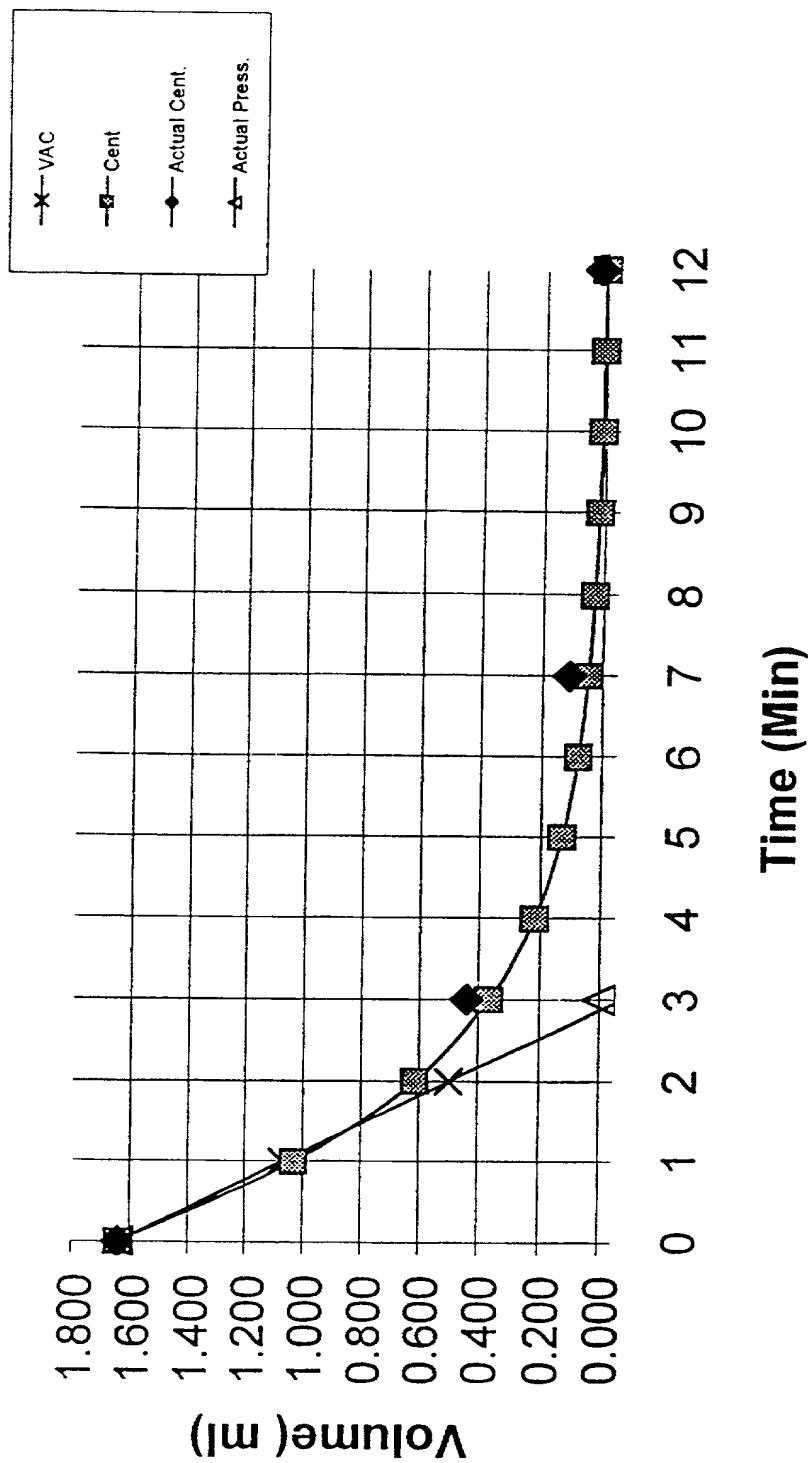


Figure 7

Please type a plus sign (+) inside this box →

PTO/SB/01 (10-00)

Approved for use through 10/31/2002. OMB 0651-0032

Patent and Trademark Office: U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

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DECLARATION FOR UTILITY OR DESIGN PATENT APPLICATION (37 CFR 1.63)	Attorney Docket Number	MCA-448A PC/US
	First Named Inventor	Jack Thacher Leonard
	COMPLETE IF KNOWN	
	Application Number	/
Filing Date		
Group Art Unit		
Examiner Name		

As a below named inventor, I hereby declare that:

My residence, mailing address, and citizenship are as stated below next to my name.

I believe I am the original, first and sole inventor (if only one name is listed below) or an original, first and joint inventor (if plural names are listed below) of the subject matter which is claimed and for which a patent is sought on the invention entitled

METHOD OF ULTRAFILTRATION

the specification of which

(Title of the Invention)

is attached hereto

OR

was filed on (MM/DD/YYYY)

2 May 2000

as United States Application Number or PCT International

Application Number **PCT/US00/11926** and was amended on (MM/DD/YYYY) (if applicable).

I hereby state that I have reviewed and understand the contents of the above identified specification, including the claims, as amended by any amendment specifically referred to above.

I acknowledge the duty to disclose information which is material to patentability as defined in 37 CFR 1.56, including for continuation-in-part applications, material information which became available between the filing date of the prior application and the national or PCT international filing date of the continuation-in-part application.

I hereby claim foreign priority benefits under 35 U.S.C. 119(a)-(d) or 365(b) of any foreign application(s) for patent or inventor's certificate, or 365(a) of any PCT international application which designated at least one country other than the United States of America, listed below and have also identified below, by checking the box, any foreign application for patent or inventor's certificate, or any PCT international application having a filing date before that of the application on which priority is claimed.

Prior Foreign Application		Foreign Filing Date	Priority	Certified Copy Attached?	
				YES	NO
			<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>

Additional foreign application numbers are listed on a supplemental priority data sheet PTO/SB/02B attached hereto:

I hereby claim the benefit under 35 U.S.C. 119(e) of any United States provisional application(s) listed below.

Application Number(s)	Filing Date (MM/DD/YYYY)	
60/132,369	4 May 1999	
60/182,357	14 February 2000	<input type="checkbox"/> Additional provisional application numbers are listed on a supplemental priority data sheet PTO/SB/02B attached hereto.

[Page 1 of 2]

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DECLARATION — Utility or Design Patent Application

Direct all correspondence to: Customer Number or Bar Code Label **25182** OR Correspondence address below

Name **John Dana Hubbard**

Address **Millipore Corporation**

Address **80 Ashby Road**

City Bedford	State MA	ZIP 01730
----------------------------	------------------------	-------------------------

Country US	Telephone 781-533-2152	Fax 781-533-3125
--------------------------	--------------------------------------	--------------------------------

I hereby declare that all statements made herein of my own knowledge are true and that all statements made on information and belief are believed to be true; and further that these statements were made with the knowledge that willful false statements and the like so made are punishable by fine or imprisonment, or both, under 18 U.S.C. 1001 and that such willful false statements may jeopardize the validity of the application or any patent issued thereon.

NAME OF SOLE OR FIRST INVENTOR : A petition has been filed for this unsigned inventor

Given Name (first and middle [if any]) Jack Thacher	Family Name or Surname Leonard
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Inventor's
Signature  **Date** **9/12/01**

Residence: City South Hamilton	State MA	Country US	Citizenship US
--	------------------------	--------------------------	------------------------------

Mailing Address **19 Ricker Circle**

City South Hamilton	State MA	ZIP 01982	Country US
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NAME OF SECOND INVENTOR: A petition has been filed for this unsigned inventor

Given Name (first and middle [if any])	Family Name or Surname
--	----------------------------------

Inventor's
Signature **Date**

Residence: City	State	Country	Citizenship
------------------------	--------------	----------------	--------------------

Mailing Address

Mailing Address

City	State	ZIP	Country
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Additional inventors are being named on _____ supplemental Additional Inventor(s) sheet(s) PTO/SB/02A attached hereto.